

MARKET STREET ELEVATED RAILWAY, 52ND STREET STATION
Intersection of Market and 52nd Streets
Philadelphia
Philadelphia County
Pennsylvania

HAER No. PA-507-F

HAER
PA
51-PHILA
719F-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
National Park Service
Philadelphia Support Office
U.S. Custom House
200 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

MARKET STREET ELEVATED RAILWAY, 52ND STREET STATION

HAER NO. PA-507-F

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PA
51-PHILA,
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Location: Intersection of Market and 52nd Streets
Philadelphia
Philadelphia County
Pennsylvania
USGS Quad: Lansdowne, PA and Philadelphia, PA 1:24,000
UTM Coordinates: 18.480763.4423126

Construction
Date: 1906 - 1907

Builder: Philadelphia Rapid Transit Company

Chief
Engineer: William S. Twining

Present
Owner: Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority
1234 Market Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19107

Present Use: Market Street Elevated Railway Station

Significance: The 52nd Street Station is an elevated station located above the intersection of Market and 52nd Streets. An intermediary station along the elevated line, it enabled residents within a few-blocks radius as well as passengers transferring from trolley lines to commute on the Elevated to Center City, Philadelphia. The station is a contributing structure within the Market Street Elevated Railway Historic District. The station is significant historically for its role in the residential development of this part of West Philadelphia, and architecturally for its design. Like many of the other stations along the Elevated, the 52nd Street Station embodies the distinctive characteristics of a particular early twentieth-century architectural style. Similar to the 63rd, 56th, and 46th Street Stations located to the west and east, the 52nd Street Station exhibits classical and eclectic detailing. The eastbound and westbound platform buildings are enclosed with copper paneling and pilasters. Other features include metal balustrades with quatrefoil motifs, clerestory windows, and bracketed cornices.

Project
Information
Statement: The Market Street Elevated Railway between Millbourne Station in Delaware County and 46th Street Station in Philadelphia will be reconstructed. The project includes replacement of the Millbourne Station and the Market Street Elevated superstructure. Plans call for the reconstruction of the stations from 63rd Street to 46th Street, but efforts will be made to retain historic features where possible. To mitigate the adverse effect, the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission stipulated HAER documentation of the existing structures. This documentation was undertaken to fulfill that stipulation.

Neeta Jitendra Desai
Cultural Heritage Research Services, Inc.
403 East Walnut Street
North Wales, PA 19454

INTRODUCTION

The Market Street Elevated Railway extends west-east along Market Street between 69th Street in Upper Darby Township, Delaware County, and 46th Street in the City of Philadelphia, Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania. Constructed between 1904 and 1908, the elevated structure is situated along Market Street between 63rd and 46th Streets. West of 63rd Street, the railway crosses Cobbs Creek, a waterway that forms the boundary between Philadelphia and Delaware Counties. From this point, the railway travels at ground level through Millbourne and terminates at the 69th Street Terminal in Upper Darby Township, Delaware County. The tracks and stations form part of the Market-Frankford Line, which is owned and operated by the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transit Authority (SEPTA), 1234 Market Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 19107.

The Market Street Elevated Railway (HAER No. PA-507) is composed of the Market Street Elevated superstructure, an associated substation (HAER No. PA-507-E), and the following railway stations: 69th Street Terminal (HAER No. PA-507-A); Millbourne Station (HAER No. PA-507-B); 63rd Street Station (HAER No. PA-507-C); 60th Street Station; 56th Street Station (HAER No. PA-507-D); 52nd Street Station (HAER No. PA-507-F); and 46th Street Station (HAER No. PA-507-G). The Market Street Elevated Railway Historic District, which consists of the Market Street Elevated Railway, was determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, historical significance and Criterion C, design/construction in August 1996.

The 52nd Street Station is an elevated station located above the intersection of Market and 52nd Streets. An intermediary station along the elevated line, it enabled residents within a few-blocks radius as well as passengers transferring from trolley lines to commute on the Elevated to Center City, Philadelphia. The station is a contributing structure within the Market Street Elevated Railway Historic District. The station is significant historically for its role in the residential development of this part of West Philadelphia, and architecturally for its design. Like many of the other stations along the Elevated, the 52nd Street Station embodies the distinctive characteristics of a particular early twentieth-century architectural style. Similar to the 63rd, 56th, and 46th Street Stations located to the west and east, the 52nd Street Station exhibits classical and eclectic detailing. The eastbound and westbound platform buildings are enclosed with copper paneling and pilasters. Other features include metal balustrades with quatrefoil motifs, clerestory windows, and bracketed cornices. Modern alterations include the construction of mezzanine levels, reconstruction of stairways, installation of modern token booths, and the application of metal over the original oak walls of the station interiors. Despite these changes, the 52nd Street Station represents a significant and distinguishable entity that has served residents of this part of West Philadelphia for nearly a century.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Two historic elevated stations are located east of the Allison Substation, the 52nd Street Station and the 46th Street Station. The 52nd Street Station, just east of the substation, is located at the intersection of Market and 52nd Streets. Like the others, the 52nd Street Station consists of east and westbound station buildings, shelters, reinforced concrete boarding platforms, and token-collection booths. These components are arranged in a configuration similar to their counterparts at the 56th Street Station. A reinforced-concrete slab mezzanine is located beneath the station buildings and boarding platforms. This was installed at the station during the late twentieth century and accommodates modern token booths. Modern sheltered metal staircases, subdivided by landings, lead from the northwest and southwest corners of 52nd and Market Streets to the station. The staircases and landings mimic the original arrangement but no longer contain historic features.

East and westbound station buildings also share architectural similarities with those at 56th Street Station. The station buildings are capped by hipped roofs, and their facades are embellished with a paneled copper facade. Clerestory windows pierce the upper portion of the facades, and the rooflines are adorned with Classical-style copper detailing. The station interiors are obscured by metal siding except along the clerestory level where beaded vertical-board siding is evident.

Historic shelters are located on both platforms. They retain the same style, form, and dimensions as those found at 56th Street Station. Historic metal rails with quatrefoil spandrel panels line the northern and southern edges of the platform. Modern rails are also located along the northern and southern edges of the platforms. In some of the sheltered areas of the platform, modern chain-link fencing extends from the rails to the shelter roof. Another historic feature associated with the 52nd Street Station includes a switching station sheathed in wood paneling on the western edge of the eastbound platform.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

By the summer of 1906 the Elevated's superstructure was completed, and work on the stations commenced. Stations along the Market Street Elevated were designed according to high architectural and efficiency standards. The first section of the railway was laid at ground level in Upper Darby Township, Delaware County. Prior to completion of the subway-elevated system, Philadelphia Rapid Transit (PRT) joined forces with two suburban surface and rail companies to erect a large terminal that would connect the Market Street line with electric lines and railways that tapped portions of Delaware, Montgomery and Chester Counties (Anonymous 1908).

Like those at grade level (Millbourne Station and 69th Street Terminal), stations erected in West Philadelphia along the Market Street Elevated superstructure were also planned with the

highest efficiency standards. Local law dictated that stations be placed 0.80 kilometers (1/2 mile) apart on average. Eight stations, therefore, were built, located at the intersections of West Market Street and 63rd, 60th, 56th, 52nd, 46th, 40th, 36th and 32nd Streets (Anonymous 1908).

The elevated stations were uniformly designed in the Classical manner that was popular during the early 1900s. Station buildings, located on both the east and westbound platforms, housed waiting rooms, men's and women's toilets, token booths and locker areas. Amenities such as water coolers and candy machines were also provided. Turnstiles and sliding gates provided entry and egress to and from the platforms. The buildings themselves measured approximately 17.37 meters (57 feet) across by 5.02 meters (16.5 feet) deep, not including exit stairs and stair landings (Philadelphia Rapid Transit Company 1931).

The stations were designed as steel-frame buildings capped by hipped roofs. The exterior facades were sheathed in Classical-style copper paneling, pilasters and molding. The facades were punctuated by double-hung sash and clerestory windows. The eaves were embellished with copper lion heads placed at regular intervals around the roofline. The station interiors were sheathed in oak paneling. Each building was equipped with lights, a waiting room heated by electricity, and toilet facilities with tiled floors, wainscoting and modern plumbing. Shelters supported by bracketed structural posts extended along reinforced concrete platforms. Metal rails embellished with quatrefoil spandrel panels flanked the outer edges of both platforms. Access to each station was provided by staircases located at the four corners of each intersection. The staircases were subdivided by landings that were capped by tin-clad flat and pyramidal roofs with galvanized iron trimmings. The stair rails were also embellished with quatrefoil spandrel panels. Steel cross passages were also provided at every station. These features enabled passengers to safely move between east and westbound stations above the busy intersections (Evening Bulletin 1907; Philadelphia Rapid Transit Company 1905). Much of the decorative metal work and structural elements that adorned and supported the stations were produced by Belmont Iron Works of Philadelphia (Philadelphia Rapid Transit Company 1905).

SOURCES OF INFORMATION/BIBLIOGRAPHY

Engineering Drawings

Philadelphia Rapid Transit Company. "Market Street Elevated Passenger Railway Company Plans." 1905. On file at Frederic R. Harris, Inc., Philadelphia, PA. Soon to be on file at the City of Philadelphia Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

. "Market Street Elevated Passenger Railway Company Plans." 1931. On file at Frederic R. Harris, Inc., Philadelphia, PA. Soon to be on file at the City of Philadelphia Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

Secondary Sources

Anonymous. *Philadelphia's Rapid Transit: Being an Account of the Construction and Equipment of the Market Street Subway-Elevated and Its Place in the Great System and Service of the Philadelphia Rapid Transit Company Together with a Review of the Millard Construction Co.* Philadelphia: Arnold & Dyer, 1908.

Rachleff, Allison, and Mary Daughtrey. *Historic Resources Survey and Determination of Eligibility Report: Market Street Elevated Reconstruction Project, Borough of Millbourne and City of Philadelphia, Delaware and Philadelphia Counties, Pennsylvania.* Report prepared for the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority. Report prepared by Cultural Heritage Research Services, Inc., North Wales, PA. 1996

Newspapers

Evening Bulletin, March 7, 1907. "Features of New 'L' Opened To-day."

Additional Resources

A large collection of historic photographs is located at the Urban Archives, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA. These photos are of stations and the superstructure, construction of the line, as well as the dismantling of the Schuylkill River to 46th Street portion of the Elevated.

Cox, Harold E. *The Road from Upper Darby.* New York: Electric Railroaders' Association, Inc., 1967.

MARKET STREET ELEVATED RAILWAY, 52ND STREET STATION
 HAER NO. PA-507-F
 (PAGE 5)



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

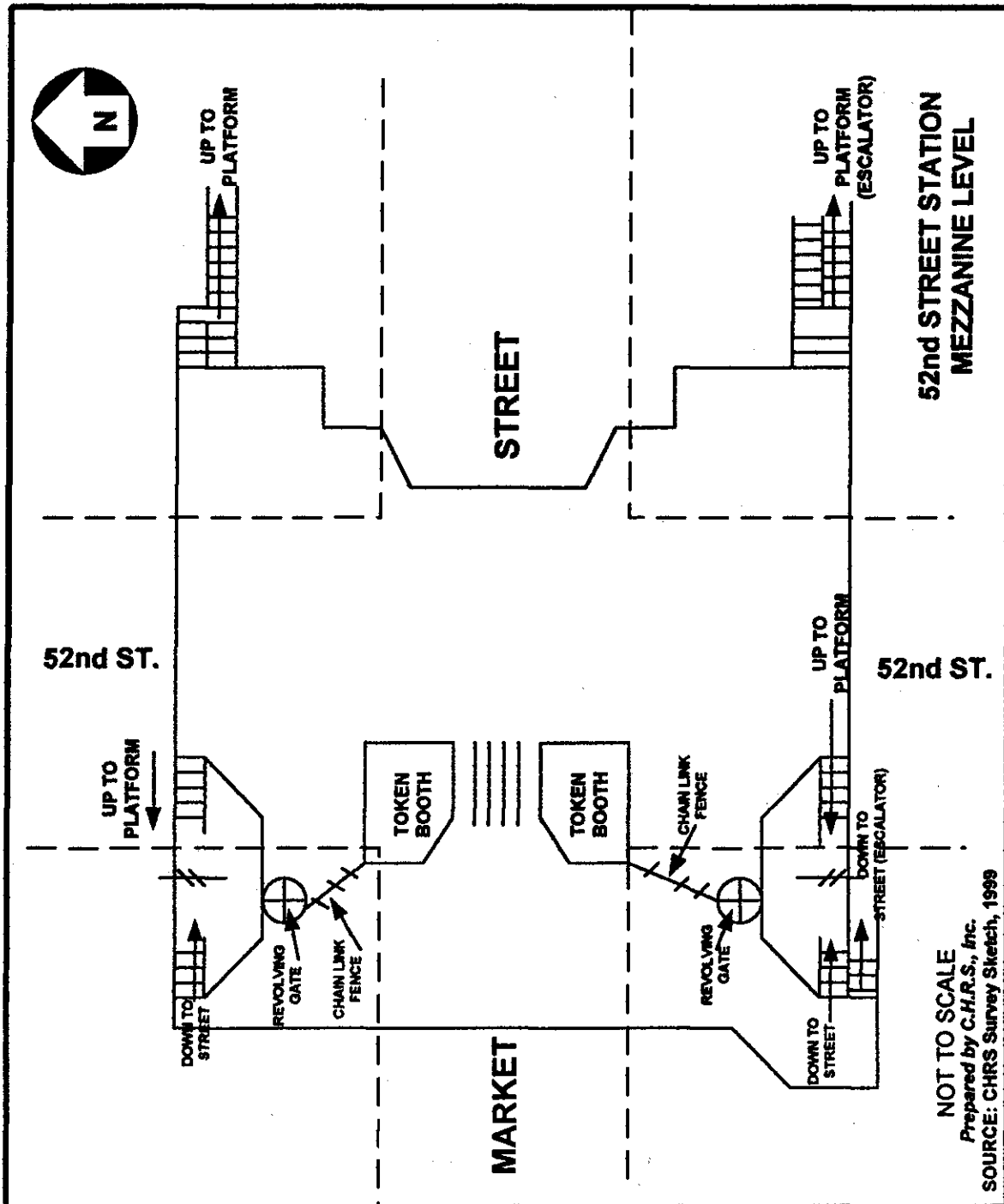


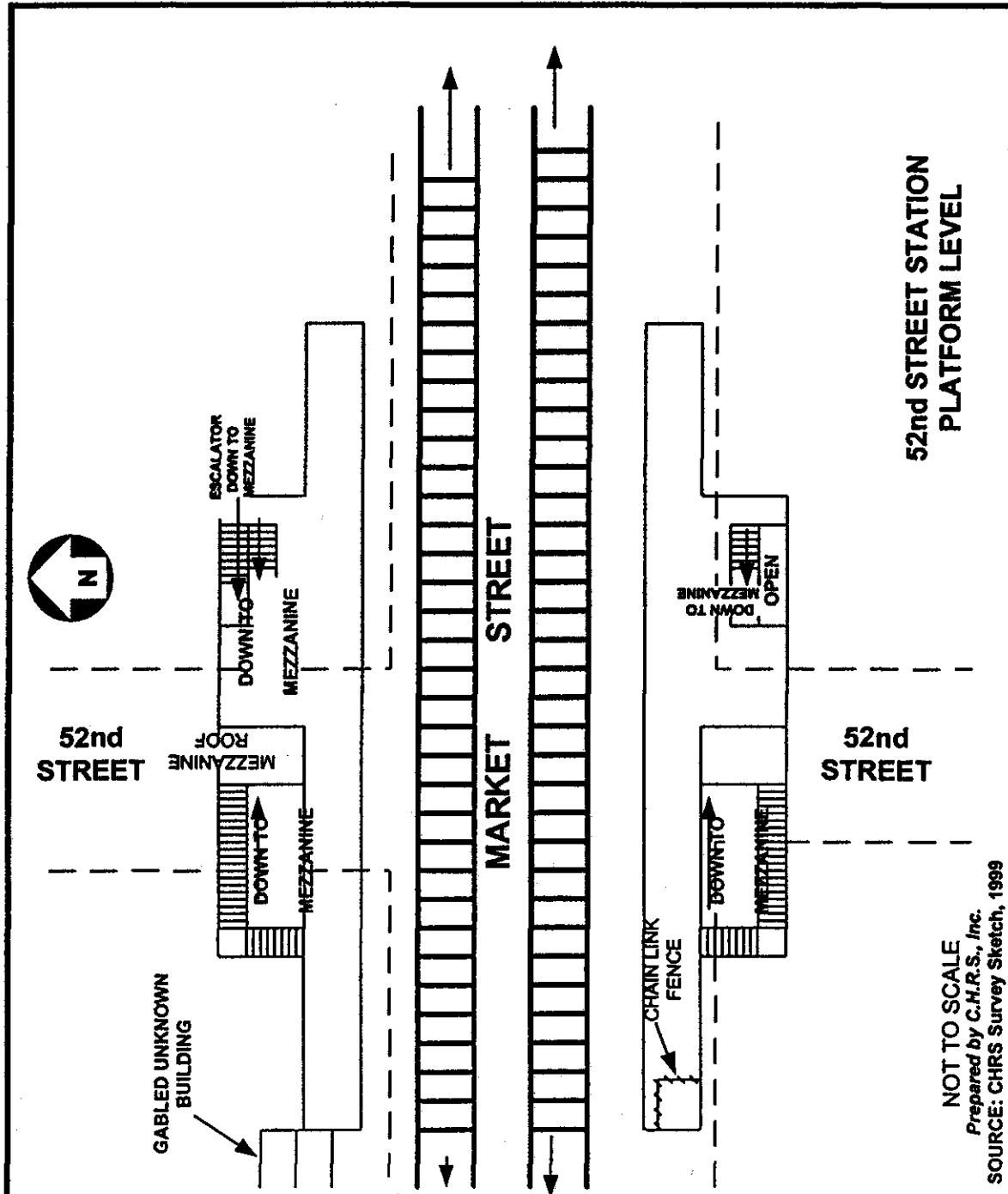
SCALE 609.5m
 0m 2000ft



Prepared by C.H.R.S., Inc.

SOURCE: U.S.G.S., 1994
 PHILADELPHIA PA





MARKET STREET ELEVATED RAILWAY, 52ND STREET STATION
 HAER NO. PA-507-F
 (PAGE 8)

